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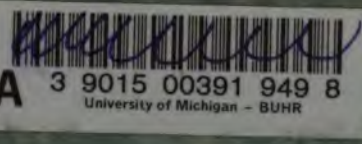

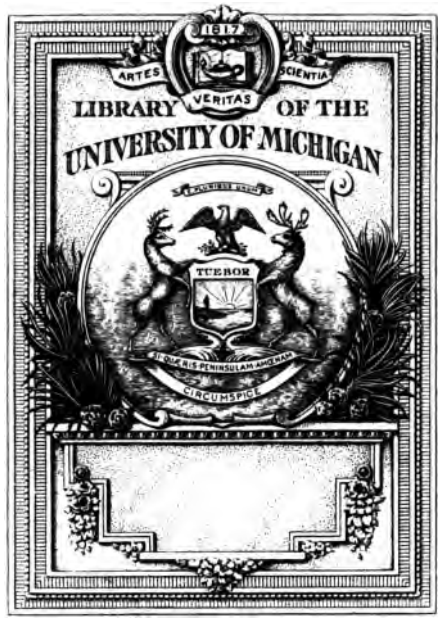
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A LETTER TO

The Rev. Mr. JOHN PALMER,

IN DEFENCE OF THE

Illuſtrations of Philoſophical Neceſſity.

BY

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F.R.S.

Reſpecting Man, whatever wrong we call
May, muſt be right, as relative to all.

POPE.

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ERRATA.

Page 4, line 8, for *preſented* read *preſent.*
P. 33 l. 14, for *ſcriptures* read *ſcripture.*

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To the Rev. Mr. PALMER.

DEAR SIR,

NOTWITHSTANDING my unwillingneſs to engage any farther in metaphyſical controverſy, there are ſome circumſtances attending your *Obſervations on my Treatiſe on Philoſophical Neceſſity*, that make me in this caſe leſs averſe to it. You are an old acquaintance, whom I reſpect, and whom I believe to be actuated by the beſt views; you are thought to be a maſter of this ſubject, and have certainly given very particular attention to it; thinking, as I myſelf do, that

it is of the greateſt importance; and now, in a work of conſiderable extent, you confine your obſervations to it.

Your publication has alſo been a work of great expectation among our common friends, who were apprized of your intentions. By your own account, in your Preface, it muſt have been compoſed more than a year ago. In this time it has been ſubmitted to the peruſal of perſons of great learning and worth, who, I am informed, think highly of it, and have recommended the publication, not only as excellent in itſelf, but as very proper to follow that of Dr. Price, who was thought by them to have been too tender of me, in our amicable diſcuſſion, and to have made ſome imprudent conceſſions. Your work, it is thought, will ſupply the deficiency in his.

You had the generoſity to propoſe ſubmitting your work to my own private peruſal; and though, for reaſons of delicacy and propriety,

priety, I thought proper to decline it, I encouraged you in your deſign of publication. Alſo, though I did not, I believe, make you any particular promiſe, you will probably expect that, all things conſidered, I ſhall give you an anſwer. I therefore do it, and with the ſame freedom with which you yourſelf have written. But, I ſhall confine myſelf chiefly to the diſcuſſion of thoſe points on which the real *merits of the queſtion* turn, without replying at large to what you have advanced with reſpect to the *conſequences* of the doctrine. Indeed, if the doctrine itſelf be true, we muſt take all the genuine conſequences, whether we reliſh them or not. I proceed, therefore, to a ſtate of the controverſy between us, and the conſideration of the nature and weight of what you urge with reſpect to it.

The principal argument for the doctrine of Neceſſity is briefly this: If, in two preciſely equal ſituations of mind, with reſpect both to diſpoſition and motives, two different deter-

minations of the will be poſſible, one of them muſt be an effect without a cauſe. Conſequently, only one of them is poſſible.

Now all that the ingenuity of man can reply to this is, either that, though the determination be uncertain, or contingent (depending neither upon the previous diſpoſition of mind, nor the motives preſented to it) it will ſtill, on ſome account or other, not properly be *an effect without a cauſe*. For that there can be any effect without a cauſe, no advocate for the doctrine of liberty has, I believe, ever aſſerted. Or, in the next place, it may be ſaid, that the above is not a fair ſtating of the queſtion in debate; for that the determinations may be invariably the ſame in the ſame circumſtances, being agreeable to ſome conſtant law or rule, and yet, not being *neceſſarily* ſo, the neceſſarian, in fact, gains no advantage by the conceſſion.

You, Sir, have combated the neceſſarians on both theſe grounds; maintaining that whatever

ever be the ſtate of mind, or the motives preſent to it, it has within itſelf a power of determining without any regard to them, the *ſelf-determining power* being itſelf the proper *cauſe* of the determination. You likewiſe aſſert that, though there ſhould be the greateſt *certainty* in all the determinations of the will, yet becauſe it is not a *phyſical*, but only a *moral certainty*, it is not a proper *neceſſity*. I ſhall conſider diſtinctly what you have advanced on both theſe views of the ſubject, in the order in which I have mentioned them.

SECTION I.

Of the Argument for the Doctrine of Neceſſity from the Conſideration of the Nature of Cauſe and Effect.

"IN the very ſame circumſtances," you ſay, p. 17, "in which the choice or deter-
"mination was directed to one object of pur-
"ſuit, it might have brought itſelf to will, or
"determine on the purſuit of a different, or
"contrary one. In other words, the mind
"is free to deliberate upon, and, in conſe-
"quence of this, to chuſe, and determine the
"motives of its conduct."

This ſtate of the caſe, I would obſerve in the firſt place, evidently implies that the mind cannot determine itſelf without ſome motive; but you think that, becauſe it is capable of *deliberating*

deliberating upon motives, it can chuſe what motive it will be determined by. But if the mind cannot finally determine without a motive, neither, ſurely, can it *deliberate*, that is, *determine to deliberate*, without a motive. Becauſe the volition to deliberate cannot be of a different nature from the volition that is conſequent to the deliberation. A volition, or a deciſion of the mind, by whatever name it be denominated, or whatever be its nature, muſt be one and the ſame thing. It muſt, in all caſes, be ſubject to the ſame rule, if it be ſubject to rule, or elſe be equally ſubject to no rule at all. You had better, therefore, ſay at once, that every determination of the mind, even the final one, may proceed on no motive at all. And your next retreat will equally ſerve you here: for you ſtill maintain that, though there be nothing, either in the diſpoſition of mind, or the motives preſent to it, that was at all the cauſe of the determination, it will not be an effect without a cauſe, becauſe the ſelf-determining power is, itſelf, a proper and adequate cauſe.

"There remains a proper cauſe," you ſay, "p. 24, a ſufficient and adequate cauſe, for "every volition or determination which is "formed. This cauſe is that ſelf-determin- "ing power, which is eſſential to agency, and "in the exerciſe of which motion begins." Again, p. 36, "One principle of freedom in "the human mind will ſufficiently account "for all their actions, and to ſeek after other "cauſes, muſt, therefore, in his own way of "reaſoning, be wholly unneceſſary."

Now to every thing that can be advanced to this purpoſe, I think I have given a ſatisfactory reply in the *additional illuſtrations*, printed in my *Correſpondence with Dr. Price*, p. 288, in which I ſhew that the ſelf-determining power, bearing an equal relation to any two different deciſions, cannot be ſaid to be a proper and adequate cauſe with reſpect to them both. But this ſection, I ſuppoſe, you muſt have overlooked, otherwiſe you could not but have thought it peculiarly neceſſary to reply to my obſervations on that ſubject,

ſubject, which ſo very materially affect your argument. I muſt, therefore, take the liberty to requeſt that you would conſider it, and reply to it.

To argue as you do here, in any other caſe, would be thought very extraordinary. If I aſk the cauſe of what is called the *wind*, it is a ſufficient anſwer to ſay, in the firſt inſtance, that it is cauſed by the motion of the air, and this by its partial rarefaction, &c. &c. &c.; but if I aſk why it blows *north* rather than *ſouth*, will it be ſufficient to ſay that, *this* is cauſed by the motion of the air? The motion of the air being equally concerned in north and ſouth winds, can never be deemed an adequate cauſe of one of them in preference to the other.

In like manner, the ſelf-determining power, allowing that man has ſuch a thing, and that it may be the cauſe of determining in general, can never be deemed a ſufficient cauſe of any one particular determination, in preference to another.

another. Suppoſing, therefore, two determinations to be poſſible, and there be nothing but the mere ſelf-determining power to decide between them, the diſpoſition of mind and motives being all exactly equal, one of them muſt want a proper cauſe, juſt as much as the north or the ſouth wind would be without a proper cauſe, if nothing could be aſſigned but the motion of the air in general, without ſomething to determine why it ſhould move this way rather than that.

Beſides, abſtractedly and ſtrictly ſpeaking, no *mere power* can ever be ſaid to be an adequate cauſe of its own acts. It is true that no effect can be produced without a power capable of producing it; but power, univerſally, requires both *objects* and proper *circumſtances*. What, for inſtance, can be done with a *power of burning*, without ſomething to burn, and this being placed within its ſphere of action? What is a *power of thinking*, or *judging*, without ideas, or objects, to think and form a judgment upon? What, therefore,

fore, can be done with a power of *willing*, without ſomething to call it forth? and it is impoſſible to ſtate any caſe in which it can be *called forth*, without implying ſuch *circumſtances*, as will come under the deſcription of *motives*, or *reaſons* for its being exerted one way rather than another, exactly ſimilar to any other power, that is, *power univerſally and abſtractedly conſidered*, corporeal or intellectual, &c. &c. &c.

SECTION II.

How far the Arguments for the Doctrine of Neceſſity are affected by the Conſideration of the Soul being material or immaterial.

BUT you have another reſource beſides that which I have conſidered in the preceding ſection; which is, that though it be true that, ſuppoſing the ſoul to be *material*, and ſubject to phyſical laws, every determination requires a foreign cauſe, yet if the ſoul be *immaterial*,

material, no ſuch cauſe is neceſſary. It may then determine itſelf in whatever manner it pleaſes.

"The whole of it" (viz. the ſection concerning the argument from cauſe and effect) you ſay, p. 20, "ſuppoſes a ſimilarity in the "conſtituent principles of matter and ſpirit; "for by thoſe only who confeſs that ſimila- "rity, will it be acknowledged that the ſame "general maxims will apply, both to effects "mechanically produced, and thoſe which "depend upon will and choice." Again, you ſay, p. 22, "To a principle of thought con- "ceived to be material, a change of circum- "ſtances may be eſſential to a difference of "volition; but when the mind is conſidered "as being in its own nature immaterial, and "therefore not ſubject to the laws of matter, "but as endued with a ſelf-determining pow- "er, a variety of volition or determination "in the ſame ſituation or circumſtances may "be admitted as poſſible, without any contra- "diction, or ſeeming difficulty at all."

Now

Now I really cannot conceive that the contradiction is at all the leſs glaring, or the difficulty more ſurmountable, on the hypotheſis of the mind being immaterial. It does, indeed, follow that the mind, being immaterial, is not ſubject to the laws of matter; but it does not, therefore, follow that it is ſubject to *no laws at all*, and conſequently has a ſelf-determining power, independent of all laws, or rule of its determinations. In fact, there is the very ſame reaſon to conclude that the mind is ſubject to laws as the body. *Perception, judgment*, and the *paſſions*, you allow to be ſo, why then ſhould the *will* be exempt from all law? Do not perception, judgment, and the paſſions, belong to the mind, juſt as much as the will; yet, notwithſtanding this, it is only in certain caſes that the powers of perception, judgment, or the paſſions, can be exerted. Admitting the mind, therefore, to be immaterial, it may only be in certain caſes that a determination of the will can take place. You muſt find ſome other ſubſtance to which the will is to be aſcribed, entirely different from

that

that in which perception and judgment inhere, before you can conclude that its affections and acts are not invariable, and even neceſſary.

Beſides, according to all *appearances*, from which alone we can be authorized to conclude any thing, the deciſions of the will as invariably follow the diſpoſition of mind, and the motives, as the perception follows the preſentation of a proper object, or the judgment follows the perceived agreement or diſagreement of two ideas. This, at leaſt, is aſſerted by neceſſarians, and it does not depend upon the mind being material or immaterial whether the obſervation be juſt or not. If it be invalidated, it muſt be on ſome other ground than this. I am willing, however, to follow you through all that you alledge in ſupport of this argument.

" Moral neceſſity," you ſay, p. 45, " ariſes " from the influence of motives; which, as " they are not phyſical beings or ſubſtances, " cannot poſſibly act as one phyſical being " or

" or ſubſtance does upon another." Again, p. 82, " where there is the greateſt certainty, " or neceſſity of a moral kind, there is always " a poſſibility of a different choice." And, p. 46, " In the ſtrict philoſophical ſenſe, no- " thing can be neceſſary, which is not phy- " ſically ſo, or which it would not be a con- " tradiction to the nature of things to ſuppoſe " not to be, or to be otherwiſe than it " is. Now this kind of neceſſity we clearly " perceive in the caſe of one body acting upon " another, and giving motion to it. But do " arguments and motives bear the ſame phy- " ſical relation to the determinations of the " mind ?"

I own I am rather ſurprized at the confidence with which you urge this argument, when it is maintained, and inſiſted on by neceſſarians, that arguments and motives *do* bear as *ſtrict* a relation (call it phyſical or moral, or by whatever name you pleaſe) to determinations of the mind, as any other cauſes in nature to their proper effects; becauſe, according to manifeſt

manifeſt appearances, the determinations of the will do, in fact, as certainly follow the apprehenſion of arguments and motives, as any one thing is ever obſerved to follow another in the whole courſe of nature; and it is juſt as much a contradiction to ſuppoſe the contrary in the one caſe as in the other, that is, a contradiction to the known and obſerved laws of nature; ſo that they muſt have been otherwiſe than they are now eſtabliſhed, if any thing elſe ſhould follow in thoſe caſes. No other kind of contradiction would follow in any caſe.

You ſay, however, p. 43, "Phyſical neceſſity is a neceſſity ariſing out of the nature "of things, and immediately depending upon "it; ſo that while things remain to be what "they are, it would be a contradiction to ſuppoſe, that the conſequences flowing from "this kind of neceſſity can be different from "thoſe which do actually reſult from it. To "ſay that any thing is neceſſary, in this ſenſe, "is the ſame as ſaying that it is a natural "impoſſibility

"impoſſibility for it not to be, or to be dif-
"ferent from what it is." And, p. 44, you
"ſay, "The fall of a ſtone is the neceſſary
"effect of that law of gravity which is im-
"preſſed upon it."

Now I do maintain, and all appearances will juſtify me in it, that a determination of the mind according to motives is, uſing your own words, that which ariſes from the very nature of the mind, and immediately dependent upon it; ſo that the mind remaining what it is, and motives what they are, it would be a contradiction to ſuppoſe that they ſhould be different from what they are in the ſame circumſtances. The parallel between material and immaterial natures is here moſt ſtrict, and the inference the very ſame in the one caſe as in the other. If the fall of a ſtone be the neceſſary effect of gravity impreſſed upon it, or upon *body*, in the very *ſame ſenſe* (becauſe for the very *ſame reaſon*) the determination of the will is the neceſſary effect of the laws impreſſed upon it,

or upon *mind*. This concluſion is as much grounded on facts and appearances as the other.

Nay, beginning with *mind*, I might, according to your mode of reaſoning, ſay firſt, that, according to all appearances, the mind is neceſſarily determined by motives, for every thing we ſee in human nature confirms it. Mind is, therefore, ſubject to fixed laws, but matter is a thing totally different from mind. It cannot, therefore (whatever appearances may be) reſemble mind in this, or any other reſpect, and conſequently muſt be free from all fixed laws whatever. Thus might your own arguments be retorted upon you, and bring you to an evident abſurdity; but, in my opinion, not a greater abſurdity, or more contrary to fact, than that the mind is free from all fixed laws, and endued with a power of ſelf-determination.

I wiſh, however, you would explain in what ſenſe it would be a *contradiction* for a ſtone

ſtone not to fall to the ground. It is only from the obſervation of the *fact* that we find it does tend to the ground. *A priori*, it would have been juſt as probable that it might have tended to recede from the ground, and to riſe upwards. Where alſo would be the contradiction, in any proper ſenſe of the word, if acids did not unite with alkalies, or if water ſhould take fire and burn, like ſpirit of wine? No perſon, I preſume, is ſufficiently acquainted with the nature of things, to pronounce, that there would be any thing that could be called a *contradiction* in reſults the very oppoſite of what we ſee do take place.

That which approaches the neareſt to a properly neceſſary effect, is *the receding of bodies after impulſe*, which you alſo maintain. But, though you ſay you *clearly perceive* this neceſſity, even this is a caſe in which, I will take upon me to ſay, you cannot *demonſtrate* the conſequence to be neceſſary. For, as I preſume I have ſhewn at large, there is not *actual contact* in *all* caſes of ſeeming impulſe,

and, therefore, the receding of one body from another, in thoſe circumſtances, is owing to a real *repulſion*, which we can no more reſolve into a *mechanical effect*, than we can thoſe of *gravity*, becauſe they both take place at a diſtance from the bodies concerned.

Now, as it is ſimply in conſequence of the obſerved *uniformity of the fact*, that I conclude a ſtone will fall to the ground, it is equally in conſequence of the obſerved uniformity of the fact, that I conclude the determination of the mind will follow the motive. An inference from obſervation is ſurely as deciſive in one caſe as in the other; and this is clearly independent of all conſideration of the mind being material or immaterial.

SECTION III.

SECTION III.

Of Certainty and Neceſſity.

YOU ſeem ſometimes willing to allow that the determination of the will may be *certain*, that is, a definite thing in definite circumſtances, and yet you maintain that it is not *neceſſary*; ſo that the arguments in favour of liberty are not affected by the conceſſion.

"The argument itſelf," you ſay, p. 74, "may be reſolved into this ſhort queſtion; "whether certainty implies neceſſity, or, "whether that which is morally certain, is, "therefore, phyſically neceſſary?" And, p. 23, "it is not the influence of motives, but their "neceſſary influence, that is denied."

Now, this is a caſe that I had conſidered ſo fully in my late *Treatiſe*, in my *Correſpondence with Dr. Price*, and in my *Letters to Dr. Horſley and Mr. Berington*, that I did not think I ſhould have heard any more of it; and yet it ſeems you have read part, at leaſt, of what I have advanced on that ſubject; for you ſay, p. 40, "The beſt reaſon that I can "collect from all that the Doctor has advan- "ced on this ſubject, in favour of ſuch a phy- "ſical connection reſpecting the operations of "the mind, is the univerſality or certainty "of the effects, that is, of the determination "which takes place in any given circumſtan- "ces. But though it be allowed that any "particular effect would ever ſo certainly "follow on a ſtate of mind, and a ſituation "of external objects correſponding with it, "this will not prove the effect to be neceſ- "ſary. A moral certainty, and a phyſical "neceſſity, or a neceſſity ariſing out of the "nature of things, cannot but imply in them "very different ideas; nor is the latter by "any means the conſequence of the former."

You

You have, indeed, been able to collect, which was not difficult, (for I had occaſion to repeat it ſeveral times) that, in favour of the *neceſſary* determination of the mind according to motives, I have urged the *certainty* and *univerſality* of ſuch a determination; but I wonder you ſhould not likewiſe have obſerved, that, in farther ſupport of this, I added, that *certainty or univerſality is the only poſſible ground of concluding, that there is a neceſſity in any caſe whatever*; and to this, which you have not ſo much as noticed, you ought principally to have replied.

Pleaſe, Sir, to reflect a moment, and tell me diſtinctly, why you believe that there is a neceſſity that a ſtone muſt fall to the ground? Can it be any thing elſe than its having been obſerved that it *conſtantly* and *univerſally* does ſo? If, therefore, the determination follows the motives as certainly as a ſtone falls to the ground, there muſt be the very ſame reaſon to conclude, that, whether we ſee *why* it is ſo or not (which, indeed, we do not in the caſe of

the falling of the ſtone) there is a *neceſſity* for its doing ſo. The difference cannot be in the *reality*, but only in the *kind* of neceſſity. The neceſſity muſt be the ſame, or equally ſtrict and abſolute in both, let the *cauſes* of the neceſſity in the two be ever ſo different.

As I have told Dr. Horſley, but which you ſeem not to have attended to, (ſee *Correſpondence with Dr. Price*, p. 223,) "I will allow "as much difference as you can between mo- "ral and phyſical cauſes. Inanimate mat- "ter, or *the pen* that I write with, is not ca- "pable of being influenced by motives, nor "is the hand that directs the pen, but the "mind that directs both. I think I diſtin- "guiſh theſe things better by the terms vo- "luntary and involuntary, but theſe are mere "words, and I make no compariſon between "them, or between moral and phyſical cauſes, "but in that very reſpect in which you your- "ſelf acknowledge that they agree, *i. e.* the "certainty with which they produce their "reſpective effects. And this is the proper "foundation

" foundation of all the neceſſity that I aſcribe " to human actions. My concluſion, that men " could not, in any given caſe, act otherwiſe " than they do, is not at all affected by the " *terms* by which we diſtinguiſh the laws and " cauſes that reſpect the mind from thoſe " which reſpect the external world. That " there are *any laws*, and that there are *any* " *cauſes*, to which the mind is ſubject, is all " that my argument requires. Give me the " thing, and I will readily give you the name."

" If" (as I obſerved to Mr. Berington, *Treatiſe on Neceſſity*, p. 174,) " the mind " be, in fact, conſtantly determined by mo- " tives, I deſire you would ſay candidly why " you object to the mere term *neceſſity*, by " which nothing is ever meant but the *cauſe* " *of conſtancy*. It is only becauſe I ſee a ſtone " fall to the ground conſtantly, that I in- " fer it does ſo neceſſarily, or according to " ſome fixed law of nature. And, pleaſe to " ſay, whether you think it could happen, " that the mind ſhould be conſtantly deter-

" mined

" mined by motives, if there was not a fixed " law of nature from which that conſtant de- " termination reſults."

Theſe paſſages, I preſume, you have overlooked. You certainly have not noticed them, or given due attention to them.

You muſt give me leave to obſerve, on this ſubject of *moral certainty*, that you ſeem ſometimes to have deceived yourſelf, by an ambiguous uſe of that term. Becauſe we are apt to be deceived in our judgments concerning the ſentiments and conduct of men, ſo that the greateſt certainty we can attain to with reſpect to them is frequently imperfect, we diſtinguiſh it from *abſolute certainty*, by calling it *moral*, and then apply the ſame term to other things, calling that a *moral certainty*, which is only a great *probability*. Thus, in the doctrine of chances, if there be a thouſand to one in my favour, I ſay there is a moral certainty that I ſhall ſucceed. But it does not follow that, becauſe the term *moral certainty* has

has by this means come to mean the ſame thing with *a high degree of probability*, nothing relating to the *mind* can have any thing more than a moral certainty, that is, a *probability*, attending it. Many propoſitions relating to the mind are as abſolutely certain as any relating to the body. That the will conſtantly and invariably decides according to motives, muſt not, therefore, be concluded to have nothing more than a moral certainty attending it, merely becauſe it is a truth relating to the *mind*, or to *morals*. It may be as abſolutely certain as any truth in natural philoſophy. It is the evidence of the *fact* that ſhould be conſidered, and not the mere nominal diſtinctions of things.

For the farther illuſtration of this ſubject, I hope to ſatisfy you, that even all that you deſcribe as moſt horrid and frightful in the doctrine of *neceſſity*, follows as evidently from your doctrine of *certainty*, provided it be a *real* certainty, though not ſuch as you would chuſe to call a *phyſical* one; and, therefore, that it

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can be nothing more than the mere *name* that you object to.

We will ſuppoſe that a child of yours has committed an offence, to which his mind was *certainly*, though *not neceſſarily*, determined by motives. He was not made, we will ſay, in ſuch a manner as that motives had a *neceſſary* effect upon his mind, and *phyſically* or *mechanically* determined his actions, but only that his mind would in all caſes *determine itſelf*, according to the ſame motives. You hear of the offence, and prepare for inſtant correction, not, however, on the idea that puniſhment is juſtifiable whenever it will reform the offender, or prevent the offences of others; but ſimply on your own idea, of its having been in the power of the moral agent to act otherwiſe than he had done.

Your ſon, aware of your principles, ſays, dear father, you ought not to be angry with me, or puniſh me, when you knew that I could not help doing as I have done. You placed

placed the apples within my reach, and knew that my fondneſs for them was irreſiſtible. No, you reply, that is not a juſt ſtate of the caſe, you were not under any *neceſſity* to take them, you were only ſo conſtituted as that you *certainly* would take them. But, ſays your ſon, what am I the better for this freedom from neceſſity? I wiſh I had been *neceſſarily* determined, for then you would not puniſh me; whereas now that I only *certainly* determine myſelf, I find that I offend juſt as much, and you always correct me for it.

A man muſt be peculiarly conſtituted, if, upon this poor diſtinction, he could ſatisfy himſelf with puniſhing his ſon in the one caſe, and not in the other. The offence he clearly foreſaw would take place: for by the hypotheſis, it was acknowledged to be *certain*, ariſing from his diſpoſition and motives; and yet merely becauſe he will not term it *neceſſary*, he thinks him a proper object of puniſhment. Beſides, pleaſe to conſider whether, if the child never *did* refrain from the offence

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in thoſe circumſtances, there be any reaſon to think that he properly *could* have refrained. We judge of all *powers* only by their *effects*, and in all philoſophy we conclude, that if any thing never *has* happened, and never *will* happen, there is a ſufficient cauſe, though it may be unknown to us, why it never *could* happen. This is our only ground of concluding concerning what is poſſible or impoſſible in any caſe.

SECTION IV.

Of the Argument for the Doctrine of Neceſſity, from the Conſideration of Divine Preſcience.

IF there be any propoſition ſtrictly *demonſtrable*, it is, as it appears to me, that *a contingent event is no object of preſcience*, or that a thing which, in its own nature, *may*, or

or *may not* be, cannot be certainly known to be future; for then it might be certainly known to be what it confeſſedly *may not be*. If, therefore, the mind of man be ſo conſtituted, as that any particular determination of his will may or may not take place, notwithſtanding his previous circumſtances, the Divine Being himſelf cannot tell whether that determination will take place or not. The thing itſelf is not ſubject to his controul, nor can be the object of his fore-knowledge.

To ſay, as you quote from ſome other perſon, p. 33, but without any declared approbation, that "fore-knowledge, if it does imply *certainty*, does yet by no means imply "*neceſſity*, and that no other certainty is implied in it than ſuch a certainty as would "be equally in the things, though there was "no fore-knowledge of them," is too trifling to deſerve the leaſt attention. You, therefore, in fact, give it up, and as, according to your ſyſtem, the Divine Being cannot have this fore-knowledge, you take a good deal of pains

pains to ſhew that he may do very well without it.

"Preſcience," you ſay, p. 31, "is by no "means eſſential to the government of free "beings,——and a government of this na- "ture, though preſcience ſhould be deemed "inadmiſſible, as a contrariety to contin- "gency in the event, may, notwithſtand- "ing, be as complete in its deſigns and ope- "rations, as the utmoſt poſſible extent of "knowledge, that is, the moſt perfect know- "ledge united with almighty power, can "make it." This, however, in theſe circumſtances, may be very incomplete, and inadequate for its purpoſe. You add, p. 30, "it cannot be impoſſible to almighty power, "when the characters of men are known, "becauſe really exiſting, to bring about by "means, which, previous to their operation, "we cannot foreſee, thoſe events which he "judges fit, and proper, for the maintainence "and promotion of the well-being of his "rational creation. And, after all, whatever

preſent

" preſent irregularities may be permitted to
" take place in the allotments of Providence
" to the ſons of men, the grand and ultimate
" part of the plan of God's moral govern-
" ment, in the exact and equal diſtribution
" of rewards and puniſhments in a future
" ſcene of exiſtence,—ſtands on the ſame
" firm and immovable grounds, whether
" the contingent actions of men be foreſeen
" or not."

This, and what you farther advance on the ſame ſubject, I really am not able to read without pain and concern. You ſay, p. 32, that " the prophecies of ſcriptures do im-
" ply divine preſcience in certain inſtances
" muſt be allowed." Now, unable as you evidently are to defend the very *poſſibility* of this preſcience, this conceſſion is rather extraordinary. To be truly conſiſtent, and, at the ſame time, a believer in revelation, you ought to aſſert, how embarraſſed ſoever you might be in making out the proof of it, that

there is no real fore-knowledge where a direct interference is not to be underſtood.

To leſſen this difficulty, you ſay, p. 27, that, "by denying that preſcience to God, "which is inconſiſtent with the idea of li- "berty or agency in man, we only deny that "to belong to the ſupreme mind, which is, "in truth, no perfection at all. For, if it be "really impoſſible that even infinite know- "ledge ſhould extend to actions or events in "their own nature contingent, that is, where "proper liberty or agency is ſuppoſed, we no "more derogate from the perfection of the di- "vine knowledge, by maintaining that God "cannot know ſuch actions or events, than we "diminiſh his power by aſſerting that it can- "not work contradictions, or what is really "no object of power at all. Equally muſt "it conſiſt with the omniſcience of the di- "vine being, to ſay he cannot know that "which is impoſſible to be known, as it "does with his omnipotence to aſſert that he

" he cannot do that which is impoſſible to " be done."

I ſhould think, however, that it muſt be a matter of deep regret to the human race, that the object of our ſupreme veneration and worſhip, on whom we conſtantly depend for *life, breath, and all things*, ſhould want ſuch an attribute as that of *preſcience*, though it ſhould be impoſſible that he could be poſſeſſed of it. It would certainly be more ſatisfactory to us to be dependent upon a being who had planned, and provided for the whole courſe of our exiſtence, before we came into being, than on one who could not tell what turn things would take with reſpect to us the next moment of our lives, and who muſt, therefore, either interpoſe by a proper miracle when we fall into any unforeſeen misfortune, or leave us to ſtruggle with it, and be overwhelmed by it.

It is certainly no reflection upon me that I cannot ſee into the table I write on, and diſcover

diſcover the internal texture of it; but I know that, as a philoſopher, it would be a great perfection and advantage to me if I occaſionally could.——I cannot help thinking that, with leſs ingenuity than you have employed to ſhew how the Divine Being might do without preſcience, that is, without *omniſcience*, you might prove that a power much ſhort of *omnipotence*, and a degree of goodneſs much leſs than infinite, might ſuffice for him; and you might ſay it would be no reflection upon him at all to be leſs the object of love and reverence than we now conceive him to be. It can be no *detraction*, you might ſay, from any being, or *degradation*, to deny him what he never could have.

I rejoice that my opinions, whether true or falſe, oblige me to think with more reverence of the Supreme Being. It gives me a higher idea of my own dignity and importance, from a ſenſe of my relation to him, and dependance upon him. You ſay, however, p. 216, that "the only character which the neceſſa-

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" rian tenet, if conſidered in its due extent, " will admit of, as belonging to the uncreated " mind, is a mixed one, in which, if I may ſo " ſpeak, matchleſs virtues and matchleſs vices " are blended together." And again, p. 188, " he cannot but appear to be (horrid thought) " the moſt ſinful of all beings." *Horrid thought* indeed. But remember, it is not the neceſſarian who has himſelf this idea of the object of his worſhip. This is only what *you* think for him; whereas it is yourſelf that deprive the Divine Being of his preſcience; which makes no ſmall difference in the caſe. It is of little conſequence to me what *you* think of the God that I worſhip, though it hurts me to hear him reproached in this manner. It is as little to you what *I* think of him whom you, or any other perſon, profeſſes to worſhip; but what *we ourſelves* think of him is a very ſerious buſineſs.

Being aware of the impoſſibility of carrying on a ſcheme of perfect moral government on your principles, without having recourſe

to a future ſtate, you, however, make yourſelf eaſy about any irregularities that cannot be remedied here, on the idea that every thing that unavoidably goes wrong in this life, will be ſet to rights in another. But will not the ſame irregularities unavoidably ariſe from the ſame cauſe, the ſame ſelf-determining power, in a future life as well as in this? You will hardly ſuppoſe that men will ever be deprived of a privilege which, in your eſtimation, is of ſo much importance to them. The nature of *man* will not be fundamentally changed, nor the nature of his *will*; and if this faculty retain the ſame character, it muſt be as much as ever perfectly uncontrolled either by the influence of motives, or by the deity himſelf. It will ſtill, then, for reaſons of its own, or for no reaſon at all, pay juſt as much or as little regard to every thing *foreign to itſelf*, as it pleaſes. Even *habits*, which may be acquired in this life, operate only as motives, or biaſes, inclining the mind to this or that choice, and nothing coming under that deſcription has any deciſive influence.

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Here is, therefore, from the unalterable nature of things, an everlaſting ſource of irregularity, which muſt always be ſuffered for the preſent, and which can only be remedied in ſome future ſtate. Thus periods of *diſorder*, and periods of *rectification*, muſt ſucceed one another to all eternity. What a proſpect does this view of things place before us!

You aſk me, p. 33, "how far it would be "agreeable to my ideas of civility and can- "dour, had any writer on the ſide of liberty, "under the warm impreſſions of an honeſt "zeal againſt the manifeſt tendency of my "*Illuſtrations of Philoſophical Neceſſity*, adopted "the ſame ſatirical ſtrain that I myſelf, in a "quotation you make from my treatiſe, uſed "with reſpect to Dr. Beattie," and then you proceed to parody my own words, inſerting my entire paragraph in a note.

"Thus," you ſay, p. 34, "our author, in "the blind rage of diſputation, heſitates not

" to deprive the ever-bleſſed God of the " poſſibility of creating, what in revelation " is repreſented as the nobleſt of his works, " a being formed in his own likeneſs, that is " *intelligent*, and *free*; ſubverting that great " principle of liberty, than which nothing " can be more eſſential to every juſt idea " of a moral government; which yet we are " every where throughout the books of ſcrip- " ture taught, that the deity conſtantly ex- " erciſes over mankind. This he has done " rather than relinquiſh his fond attach- " ment to the doctrines of materialiſm and " neceſſity; doctrines which ſeem to draw " after them an univerſal fataliſm, through " the whole extent of nature, and which, if " really true, it muſt be unſpeakably injurious " both to the virtue and happineſs of the ge- " nerality of mankind to make public."

I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity you have given me of trying how I ſhould feel on this occaſion. For, otherwiſe, we are ſo apt to overlook beams in our own eyes, while we

can

can diſcover motes in the eyes of others, that I might not have attended to it; and I will tell you frankly how it is with me. Had I thought the reflection *juſt*, I ſhould have felt it; though ſeeing it to proceed from an *honeſt zeal*, ſhould not have thought it contrary to any thing that ought to be termed *civility*, or *candour*. But becauſe I conſider it as altogether founded on a miſtake, I think it injurious to me, and unworthy of you.

I really ſuſpect that neither you nor Dr. Beattie have ſufficiently *attended to* the proofs of the divine preſcience, either from reaſon or revelation. For they appear to me really ſtronger, and more ſtrictly concluſive, than the arguments we have for his omnipotence or his infinite goodneſs; and the Divine Being himſelf propoſes this as the very teſt and touch-ſtone of *divinity itſelf*, ſo that a being not poſſeſſed of it is not, in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe, intitled to the appellation of *God*.— "Thus ſaith the Lord," Iſa. xli. 22, concerning idols, "Let them ſhew us what ſhall

"happen

" happen. Let them ſhew the former things " what they be, or declare us things to come. " Let them ſhew the things that are to " come hereafter, that we may know that they " are Gods."

This, I own, is *preaching* to one whoſe office it is to preach to others; but I muſt preach on, and obſerve, that if you will only attend to the amazing variety and extent of the ſcripture prophecies, comprizing the fate of all the great empires in the world, the very *minutiæ* of the Jewiſh hiſtory, and all that is to befall the chriſtian church to the very end of the world, you cannot entertain a doubt, but that every thought in the mind of every man (aſtoniſhing as the idea is) *muſt* have been diſtinctly perceived by the ſupreme ruler of all things from the beginning of the world.

You ſay, " the prophecies of ſcripture im- " ply preſcience *in certain inſtances.*" This is greatly narrowing the matter, and giving an idea of it far below the truth. They not only

only *imply*, but directly *aſſert* it in *numberleſs inſtances*; and it is implied, I may ſay, in an infinity of inſtances. Conſider only, for I think it very poſſible that you may never have attended to it at all (as your principles will naturally incline you to look another way) conſider, I ſay, how many millions of human volitions muſt have taken place from the beginning of the world, that really (directly or indirectly) contributed to the *death of Chriſt*, in the *very peculiar circumſtances* in which it was actually foretold; volitions which, according to all appearance (from which alone we are authorized to form any concluſion) were perfectly natural, and uncontrolled by ſupernatural influence; and you cannot think it extravagant to ſay, that all the volitions of the minds of all men muſt have been known to him that could foretel that one event, *in its proper circumſtances*. Not only muſt he have foreſeen the tempers and diſpoſitions of the rulers and common people of the Jews, the peculiar character of Pilate, Herod, and of every man immediately concerned in the tranſ-

tranſaction, and the peculiar manners and cuſtoms of the Romans, but all that had *preceded*, to give the Romans their power, and form their manners and cuſtoms, as well as thoſe of the Jews and other nations. Think but a few minutes on the ſubject, and it will ſwell far beyond your power of conception, and overwhelm you with conviction. It impreſſes my mind in ſuch a manner, that, I own, I cannot help being extremely ſhocked at the ſeeming *levity* with which you treat this moſt ſerious of all ſubjects.

Such is the evidence of the divine preſcience from the conſideration of the ſcripture prophecies, that, if they be duly conſidered, I do not think it in the power of the human mind to reſiſt it; and without regard to any *conſequences*, that metaphyſical ſyſtem which implies it, and is implied by it, *muſt be true*: And when the whole ſcheme is ſeen in its true colour and form, nothing can appear more admirable and glorious, more honourable to God, or more happy for man. But I will not enlarge

enlarge on the ſubject, though I can hardly forbear doing it.

Compared with this, how exceedingly low and poor muſt be their idea of the moral government of God, who hold him to have no fore-knowledge of the actions of men; and with what little ſatisfaction can they contemplate it? Only conſider on that hypotheſis, the millions, and millions of millions of volitions that take place every moment, on the face of this earth only, which the Divine Being, having no proper foreſight of, cannot poſſibly control. For the mind of man is held to be as abſolute, and uncontrolled, within its proper ſphere, as the Divine Being is in his. The unknown effects of all theſe volitions he muſt always be anxiouſly watching, in order to remedy the inconveniencies that may ariſe from them as ſoon as poſſible; and he muſt have a diſtinct expedient provided for every contingency. What regularity or harmony can there be on ſuch a ſcheme as this? What ſtrange uncertainty, confuſion, and

and perplexity, muſt reign every where! I am unable to proceed any farther with the ſhocking picture. I thank God that ſuch is not my idea of the government under which I really live.

To give our common readers an opportunity of judging of the paragraph which you think ſo obnoxious, and which you have taken care to bring into their view more than once, I ſhall myſelf recite the whole, with ſome things that precede and follow it.

" Among other things, our author gently " touches upon the objection to the contin- " gency of human actions from the doctrine " of the divine preſcience. In anſwer to " which, or rather in deſcanting upon which " (thinking, I ſuppoſe, to chuſe the leſs of " two evils) he ſeems to make no great diffi- " culty of rejecting that moſt eſſential prero- " gative of the divine nature, though nothing " can be more fully aſcertained by indepen- " dent evidence from revelation, rather than

" give

" give up his darling hypotheſis of human
" liberty; ſatisfying himſelf with obſerving,
" that *it implies no reflection on the divine power*
" *that it cannot perform impoſſibilities.* In the
" very ſame manner he might make himſelf
" perfectly eaſy if his hypotheſis ſhould com-
" pel him to deny any other of the attributes
" of God, or even his very being; for what
" reflection is it upon any perſon, or thing,
" that things impoſſible cannot be? Thus
" our author, in the blind rage of diſputa-
" tion, heſitates not to deprive the ever-bleſſed
" God of that very attribute, by which, in
" the books of ſcripture, he expreſsly diſtin-
" guiſhes himſelf from all falſe Gods, and
" than which nothing can be more eſſentially
" neceſſary to the government of the univerſe,
" rather than relinquiſh his fond claim to the
" fancied privilege of *ſelf-determination*; a
" claim which appears to me to be juſt as
" abſurd as that of *ſelf-exiſtence*, and which
" could not poſſibly do him any good if he
" had it.

" Terrified,

" Terrified, however, as I am willing to " ſuppoſe (though he does not expreſs any " ſuch thing) at this conſequence of his ſyſ- " tem, he thinks, with thoſe who maintain " a *trinity* of perſons in the unity of the di- " vine eſſence, and with thoſe who aſſert " the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation*, to ſhelter " himſelf in the obſcurity of his ſubject; " ſaying, that *we cannot comprehend the* " *manner in which the Divine Being operates.* " But this refuge is equally untenable in " all the caſes, becauſe the things them- " ſelves are, in their own nature, impoſſi- " ble, and imply a contradiction. I might " juſt as well ſay that, though to us, whoſe " underſtandings are ſo limited, *two* and *two* " appear to make no more than *four*, yet " in the divine mind, the comprehenſion of " which is infinite, into which, however, " we cannot look, and concerning which it " is impoſſible, and even dangerous, to form " conjectures, they may make *five*."

" Were

"Were I poſſeſſed of Dr. Beattie's talent "of declamation, and had as little ſcruple to "make uſe of it, what might I not ſay of "the abſurdity of this way of talking, and "of the horrible immoral conſequences of "denying the fore-knowledge of God? I "ſhould ſoon make our author, and all his "adherents, as black as Atheiſts. The very "admiſſion of ſo untractable a principle as "*contingency* into the univerſe, would be no "better than admitting the Manichæan doc-"trine of *an independent evil principle*. Nay, "it would be really of worſe conſequence, "for the one might be controlled, but the "other could not. But, I thank God, my "principles are more generous, and I am as "far from aſcribing to Dr. Beattie all the "real conſequences of his doctrine (which, "if he could ſee with my eyes, he would "reprobate as heartily as I do myſelf) as I "am from admitting his injurious imputati-"ons with reſpect to mine."

I do aſſure you, Sir, I ſee nothing to retract in all this, though it is in the firſt of my works in which I mentioned the ſubject of *Neceſſity*; and I do not at all envy you the diſcovery, that, for the purpoſes of the moral government of God, *fore-knowledge* is a ſuperfluous attribute.

SECTION V.

Of the MORAL TENDENCY *of the Doctrine of Neceſſity.*

IT is on the ſubject of the *moral tendency* of the doctrine of neceſſity, that you imagine your arguments the ſtrongeſt, and that you declaim with the greateſt warmth and confidence. To all this, however, I think it unneceſſary for me to reply. For, notwithſtanding all you have written on this favourite

vourite theme, I am perfectly ſatisfied with what I have already advanced, and think it altogether unaffected by your reply. Beſides it behoves you, in the firſt place, to prove the doctrine to be falſe. For if it be true, the conſequences will follow, and you, as well as myſelf, muſt make the beſt we can of them. And I beſeech you, for your own ſake, that you would not repreſent them as ſo very frightful, leſt, after all, *they ſhould prove true.*

In the mean time, have ſome little tenderneſs for *me*, and conſider with what ſentiments one who firmly believes the doctrine of neceſſity to be true, and at the ſame time to abound with the moſt glorious conſequences, who imagines he feels it favourable to true elevation of mind, leading, in an eminent manner, to piety, benevolence, and ſelf-government, muſt peruſe the account you have been pleaſed to draw of his principles. The following are but a few of the features:

"I cannot but think," you ſay, p. 242, "that the doctrine of neceſſity looks very "much like a refinement on the old Mani-"chæan notion of two independent princi-"ples of good and evil, which, in this ſyſtem, "are blended in one." "I cannot but think," you ſay, p. 183, "ſuch ſentiments as danger-"ous in their tendency, as they are falſe and "abſurd in themſelves. They ſeem very ma-"terially, though undeſignedly, to affect the "moral character of the deity, and to be big "with conſequences the moſt fatal to the "virtue and happineſs of mankind. I can-"not but look upon the promulgation of the "ſcheme of neceſſity," p. 175, "as highly "exceptionable, becauſe it is likely to do "unſpeakable miſchief."

For my part, when I read ſuch things as theſe, I feel as I ſhould do if I were charged with being a negroe, or with having cloven feet. I ſtrip off my clothes, look at my ſkin, and get my neighbours to look at it. I take

off

off my ſhoes, and ſee and feel my feet. But then finding myſelf of the ſame complexion with my neighbours, and formed as they are, I need not tell you what I think of my accuſer.

Before you had concluded, as you have done, that the publication of the doctrine of neceſſity *muſt* do ſuch unſpeakable miſchief to *the generality of mankind*, as you ſomewhere expreſs yourſelf, you would have done well, I think (and in this I ſpeak as a philoſopher) to have conſulted the Newgate Calendar, and have examined the ſtate of executions ſince the promulgation of the ſcheme. You ſhould alſo have enquired of the Ordinary what books the felons in general have been moſt fond of, and what ſyſtem of metaphyſics they have been moſt addicted to. The date of the promulgation of theſe principles is old enough for a pretty fair *experiment* of this curious kind.

If the world is not *yet* turned upſide down with murders and robberies, let us flatter ourſelves that it may ſtand a while longer, and that the doctrine of neceſſity, if it be a *poiſon*, is, however, a ſlow if not an uncertain one; that not my conſtitution alone, as you charitably ſuppoſe, but even that *of the generality of mankind*, is ſtrong enough to reſiſt it.

Grave as the ſubject naturally is, yet your manner of conſidering it is ſuch, that I cannot help treating it with ſome degree of pleaſantry. However, I ſhall now treat your ſerious accuſations with the gravity that yourſelf will think them intitled to; and I think I may undertake to ſatisfy you, from your own mode of arguing, that there is nothing whatever to be apprehended from the doctrine of neceſſity, but, on the contrary, the greateſt good, and that you evidently argue on principles inconſiſtent with each other when you throw ſo much odium on the ſcheme.

In the firſt place, you ſay, p. 149, that "on the ſcheme of neceſſity all is reſolved "into a divine conſtitution, which is unal- "terably fixed. If any, therefore, are to "ſucceed better, or be happier, in any part "of their exiſtence than others, their ſupe- "rior proſperity and happineſs will be infal- "libly ſecured to them; and though there "is a certain diſpoſition of mind, and courſe "of action, which are inſeparably connected "with their ſucceſs and happineſs, as means "to bring about thoſe events, yet the means "as well as the end are alike neceſſary; and "having no power to make either the one "or the other at all different from what "they are, or are to be, their lot, through "the whole of their being, is by them abſo- "lutely unalterable. What, again, I ſay, "can have a ſtronger tendency to relax the "mind, and ſink it into a ſtate of indolence "and inactivity?"

Here then you reduce the neceſſarian, to a ſtate of abſolute *inactivity*, that is, indiſpoſed

to *any purſuits*, virtuous or vicious. For your argument, if it goes to any thing, goes to both alike.

But, on the other hand, you conſtantly ſuppoſe, ſo that I have no occaſion to quote particular paſſages, that the neceſſarian will, of courſe, give himſelf up to the gratification of all his paſſions, and purſue without reſtraint whatever he apprehends to be his intereſt or happineſs.

Here then, notwithſtanding the natural *indolence* of the neceſſarian, you are able, when your argument requires it, to find a conſiderable ſource of *activity* in him; becauſe you have diſcovered, that, like other men, he has *paſſions*, and a *regard to his intereſt and happineſs*.

But, ſurely, it is not difficult to conceive, that this activity, from whatever ſource it ariſes, may take a good as well as a bad turn, and lead to virtue or vice, according as it is directed.

directed. If the gratification of our lower appetites leads to evil, the gratification of the higher ones, as benevolence, &c. (of which, I hope, you will admit that a neceſſarian, being a man in other reſpects, may be poſſeſſed) muſt lead to good; and that, if falſe notions of intereſt and happineſs inſtigate a man to vice, juſt notions of his intereſt and happineſs muſt lead to virtue. In fact, therefore, upon your own principles, nothing is requiſite to convert even a neceſſarian from vice to virtue, but the better informing his underſtanding and judgment, which you expreſsly allow to be mechanical things, being always determined by a view of the objects preſented to them, and to have nothing of ſelf-determination belonging to them.

This, if there be any force in your own reaſoning, muſt be a ſufficient anſwer to every thing that you ſo pathetically and repeatedly urge concerning the miſchiefs to be dreaded from the doctrine of neceſſity. It would

would be very diſagreeable to me to go over all that you ſay on this ſubject, and, therefore, I am glad to find that I have no occaſion to do it.

I am ſorry to find that, in purſuing your ſuppoſed advantage ſo inconſiderately as you do, you, in fact, plead the cauſe of vice, and repreſent it as triumphing over every conſideration drawn from the preſent or a future ſtate. "How is a vicious man," you ſay, p. 185, "who finds that the preſent "natural good of pleaſure or profit reſults "from the gratification of his appetites, "and from defrauding or over-reaching his "neighbour, to be perſuaded to think that "vice is productive of evil to him here? On "the ſuppoſition that there is no moral dif-"ference in things, all moral arguments "againſt the courſe of conduct to which his "appetites or inclinations prompt him, im-"mediately vaniſh. As long, therefore, as "he can make his preſent conduct conſiſtent "with what is his natural good, or which

"he

" he looks upon to be ſo, that is, with ſenſi-
" tive pleaſure, or his worldly advantage, all
" is right and well, ſo far as regards the pre-
" ſent ſcene of things."

Now I am really ſurprized that you, who have been ſo long a preacher, could not, on this occaſion, recollect any thing in anſwer to ſuch a libertine as this, without having recourſe to arguments drawn from a future ſtate, and even independent of moral conſiderations, of which it is but too apparent that mere ſenſualiſts and worldly-minded perſons make little account. Do no evils ariſe to the bodily conſtitution, to the mental faculties, or to ſociety, from habitual exceſs in eating or drinking, or from the irregular indulgence of other natural appetites? And ſhort of exceſs we are within the bounds of virtue; for in fact, nothing is ever properly termed exceſs, but what does terminate (and it is ſo called becauſe it terminates) in pain and miſery. Is it not poſſible that a man may both ſhorten his life, and make his

ſhort

ſhort life miſerable, by his vices? Only reperuſe your own excellent ſermon, intitled, *The inſanity of the Senſualiſt*, written long before this controverſy, and you will find many valuable obſervations to this purpoſe.

Suppoſing conſcience entirely out of the queſtion, are injuſtice and oppreſſion always ſucceſsful, and are there not many proverbs founded on general experience, teaching even the vulgar, in a variety of expreſſion, that, ſome how or other, ill-gotten wealth does not contribute to happineſs? Or, excluſive of the natural courſe of things, are there no ſuch things as laws and magiſtrates in human ſociety? Are there no gallows, gibbets, or wheels, to which flagrant wickedneſs may bring a man? Now may not a neceſſarian ſee the neceſſary connection of theſe *natural evils* with a courſe of vicious indulgence, as well as any other perſon; and, fully apprehending this, can he purſue the one without chuſing his own deſtruction, of which I fancy you will allow that he is juſt as incapable as any perſon whatever. Beſides,

Beſides, it is very unfair to ſay that becauſe a neceſſarian conſiders thoſe things which are generally termed *moral*, as coming ultimately under the ſame deſcription with things *natural*, that, therefore, he believes there are no ſuch things at all. You well know that he does not conſider theſe things as at all the leſs *real*, though, as a philoſopher, he chuſes to give them another name. A ſenſe of right and wrong, the ſtings of conſcience, &c. (which, however, will not, in general, be ſo much felt by thoſe who believe no future ſtate) are things that actually exiſt, by whatever names they be ſignified, and will be felt in a greater or leſs degree by the moſt hardened tranſgreſſor.

Dr. Hartley and myſelf have endeavoured to ſhew that the peculiar feeling of *remorſe*, ariſing from aſcribing our actions to ourſelves, can never vaniſh, or ceaſe to influence us, till we arrive at ſuch a comprehenſion of mind, as will enable us habitually to aſcribe every thing to God, and that when we

we are arrived at this ſtate, we ſhall live in communion with God, and ſhall ſtand in no need of ſuch a motive to virtue. Before this period, let a man be ſpeculatively a neceſſarian, or whatever he will, and let him pretend what he pleaſes, it will be *naturally impoſſible* for him not to feel all the pungency of remorſe, whenever even yourſelf would ſay that he ought to feel it. You muſt invalidate our reaſoning on this ſubject, from the conſideration of the nature of the human mind, before you can make it appear that a neceſſarian, *as ſuch*, will be a bad man. But as you lay ſo very much ſtreſs on this ſubject of remorſe of conſcience, I will diſcuſs the matter a little farther with you.

You ſay that remorſe of conſcience implies that a man thinks he could have acted otherwiſe than he did. I have no objection to admit this, at the ſame time, that I ſay he deceives himſelf in that ſuppoſition. I believe, however, there are few perſons, even thoſe who blame themſelves with the greateſt

eſt pungency, but, if they will reflect, will acknowledge, that in ſo ſuppoſing, they leave out the conſideration of the ſituation they were in at the time of the tranſaction, and that with the ſame diſpoſition of mind that they had then, and the ſame motives, they ſhould certainly have acted the ſame part over again; but that having, ſince that time, acquired a different diſpoſition, and different views of things, they unawares carry them back, and conſider how they would have acted with their preſent acquired diſpoſitions. However, their diſpoſition being really altered by what has occurred to them ſince, they would not *now* act the ſame part over again, and therefore, all the proper ends of remorſe are ſufficiently anſwered.

If you ſay that the peculiar feeling of remorſe is founded on a miſtake, I anſwer, ſo are the peculiar feelings of anger in moſt caſes, and likewiſe the peculiar feelings of all our paſſions, and that a philoſopher, who ſhould have ſtrength of mind to conſider his ſituation,

ſituation, would do the ſame things coolly and effectually without that *ſtimulus*, that the vulgar do with it. He would puniſh an offender without anger, and he would reform his own conduct without remorſe. But neither you nor myſelf, neceſſarian as I am, can pretend to this degree of perfection. It is acquired by experience; and the firmeſt belief of the doctrine of neceſſity can only accelerate our progreſs towards it to a certain degree. All this I have endeavoured to explain in my *Additional Illuſtrations*, but you have not noticed it.

What you ſay of the little influence of the motives to virtue which the neceſſarian can draw from the conſideration of a *future life*, by no means concerns the neceſſarian as ſuch. "In relation to futurity," you ſay, p. 185, "it is naturally to be ſuppoſed, that a man "of this diſpoſition" (*i. e.* a vicious neceſſarian) "will not concern himſelf about it, or "if he does, his neceſſarian principle, by "holding up to his view his future moral

"good

" good or happineſs, as ſecured to him by " his omnipotent Creator, will lead him ha- " ſtily to paſs over all intermediate ſufferings " with which he is threatened, how long or " ſevere ſoever, conſidering them only as na- " tural evils, which he can no more avoid " than the courſe of action which is connected " with them."

You know very well that they are not neceſſarians only who believe, that all the ſufferings of a future life are corrective, and will terminate in the reformation of thoſe who are expoſed to them. And a man muſt not be a neceſſarian, but the reverſe of one, and the reverſe of every thing that *man* is, before he can be made to ſlight the conſideration either of preſent or future evils, eſpecially long and ſevere ones, provided he really believes them, and gives proper attention to them. But with this *belief* and *attention* they cannot but influence any man who regards his own happineſs, and who believes the inſeparable connection between virtue

and happineſs (which no man believes more firmly than the neceſſarian) to have recourſe to a life of virtue, as the only road to happineſs, here or hereafter. And having, from whatever motive, begun to tread this path, he will perſiſt in it from a variety of other and better principles.

That you ſhould prefer the Calviniſtic doctrine of *eternal puniſhments*, horrible as you ſay it is, to that of *univerſal reſtoration* to virtue and happineſs, could ſurely be dictated by nothing but your abhorrence of the doctrine of neceſſity in general, to which it is uſually, but not neceſſarily, an appendage. "I cannot but be of opinion," you ſay, p. 239, "that the perſuaſion of the final "reſtoration of all the wicked to virtue and "happineſs, which it" (the doctrine of neceſſity) "ſupports, will, in its natural ope-"ration, have a very pernicious influence on "the unſettled minds of the generality of "mankind: while the doctrine of eternal re-"medileſs torments for the non-elect, taught "by

"by Calviniſm, horrible as it is in itſelf, "may, in the way of reſtraint, have a con- "ſiderable effect, and in ſome inſtances may "probably produce an external reformation "of life."

You may juſt as well ſay, that a civil magiſtrate who puniſhes without reaſon, mercy, or bounds, will be more reſpected than an equitable judge, who exacts an adequate puniſhment for every offence. Beſides, the doctrine of eternal puniſhments for the offences of a ſhort life is ſo very abſurd, that it muſt ever be attended with a ſecret incredulity. At leaſt, a man, though wicked, yet thinking he does not deſerve the everlaſting pains of hell, will not believe that he ſhall be ſent thither, and therefore will indulge a notion that he ſhall go to heaven, and eſcape puniſhment altogether. But I need not argue this point, as it does not belong to me as a neceſſarian to do it. I have already argued in my *Inſtitutes of natural and revealed Religion.*

SECTION VI.

What makes Actions a MAN'S OWN, *and* DEPENDING ON HIMSELF.

TO what I have already advanced in reply to your remarks on the moral influence of the doctrine of neceſſity, and the compariſon of it with the Calviniſtic doctrine of predeſtination, I ſhall add, in a ſeparate ſection, ſome conſiderations on men's actions as *depending on themſelves*, and being *their own*, on which you lay ſo much ſtreſs, and which runs through your whole book. Now I am confident that, in what you ſay on this ſubject, you deceive yourſelf by the uſe of words, or you could not draw the conſequences that you do from what you ſuppoſe to be my doctrine on this ſubject.

Strictly

Strictly and philoſophically ſpeaking, my ſucceſs in any thing I wiſh to accompliſh, depends upon myſelf, if my own exertions and actions are neceſſary links in that chain of events by which alone it can be brought about. And, certainly, if I do know this, and the object or end be deſirable to me, this deſire (if it be of ſufficient ſtrength) cannot but produce the exertion that is neceſſary to gain my end. This reaſoning appears to me extremely eaſy, and perfectly concluſive, and yet, though I have repeated it ſeveral times, and have placed it in a variety of lights, you do not ſeem to have conſidered it. I ſhall, therefore, give another inſtance, and add ſome farther illuſtrations.

Can I have a ſufficiently ſtrong wiſh to anſwer your book, and not of courſe read it, mark proper extracts from it, arrange them, write my remarks upon them, then tranſcribe them for the preſs, and put them into the hands of a bookſeller or printer, &c. when I know, that if all this be not done, the book

will never be anſwered? Surely my firm belief that all theſe things are neceſſarily connected, muſt convince me of the neceſſity of ſetting about the work, if I wiſh to do it at all; and my *wiſh* to have it done is here to be ſuppoſed, as having ariſen from a variety of previous circumſtances.

If, therefore, I ſhall certainly find myſelf diſpoſed to act juſt as I now do, believing my actions to be neceſſary, your objection to my doctrine on this account cannot have a ſufficient foundation. You ſay, that if the thing *muſt be*, it *muſt be*; if your book *is to be* anſwered by me, it *will be* anſwered by me; and that I may, therefore, make myſelf eaſy about it, and do nothing. I anſwer, that ſo I ſhould, either if I had no deſire to have it done, which happens not to be the caſe, or if I thought that no exertions of mine were neceſſary to gain my end, which is not the caſe neither. On this conſideration depends the capital diſtinction that I make between the

the doctrines of philoſophical neceſſity and Calviniſtic predeſtination.

The Calviniſts make the work of converſion to be wholly of God's free and ſovereign grace, independent of every thing in the perſon thus regenerated or renovated, and to which he cannot in the leaſt contribute. In this work, they ſay, God is the ſole agent, and men altogether paſſive; that both to *will* and to *do* is of God's pleaſure; and ſo much ſo, that without his immediate agency, to which nothing on the part of man can contribute, let a man exert himſelf ever ſo much, in the uſe of all poſſible means, yet all his volitions and all his actions would be only ſinful, and deſerving of the wrath and curſe of God to all eternity.

In this caſe I do not ſee what a man can have to do, becauſe his doing, or his not doing, is equally unconnected with the end he has in view. But this is the very reverſe of the doctrine of philoſophical neceſſity, which

ſuppoſes a neceſſary connection between our endeavours and our ſucceſs; ſo that if only the *deſire of ſucceſs*, the firſt link in this chain, be ſufficiently ſtrong, all the reſt will follow of courſe, and the end will be certainly accompliſhed.

According to the Calviniſts, there may be the moſt earneſt deſire, without a man's being at all the nearer to his end, becauſe the *deſire* and the *end* have no neceſſary connection, by means of intermediate links, as we may ſay, in the chain that joins them.

It is on this ground that Dr. Hartley juſtly ſuppoſes that the doctrine of neceſſity has a tendency to make men exert themſelves, which he makes the fifth advantage attending the ſcheme. "It has a tendency," he ſays, p. 344, of my edition, "to make us labour "more earneſtly with ourſelves and others, "particularly children, from the greater cer-"tainty attending all endeavours that operate "in a mechanical way."

Another

Another of your arguments relating to this ſubject, I really cannot treat with ſo much ſeriouſneſs as you will probably expect. I ſhall not, however, dwell long upon it, and with this I ſhall cloſe the ſection.

I had obſerved, that a volition may be termed *mine*, if it takes place in my mind. Animadverting on this, you ſay, p. 80, "Can "that be truly ſaid to be my volition, my act, "which is produced by ſomething over "which I had no power. On that ground "every thing that takes place in my body, "as well as in my mind, may with equal "propriety be called my act or volition;— "and ſo the circulation of the blood, and "the pulſation of the heart, may with equal "reaſon be called my volitions."

Now, Sir, is not *judgment* always called an *act of the mind*, as well as volition? But has any man power over this? Is not this neceſſarily determined by the view of arguments, &c.? You will not deny it. Does it not,

not, therefore, follow, on your own principles, that whatever paſſes in your body, as well as in your mind, may with equal propriety be called an act of your judgment;—and ſo the circulation of your blood, and the pulſation of your heart, may with equal reaſon be called your *judgment*. But the very ſame things were before proved to be *volitions*. *Ergo*, *judgments* and *volitions* are the ſame things. By the ſame mode of reaſoning, it would be eaſy to prove your head to be your feet, and your feet your head, and both of them to be the ſame with your underſtanding, or any thing elſe belonging to you.

SECTION

SECTION VII.

Of the proper Object of this Controverſy, and a ſummary View of the principal Sources of Miſtake with reſpect to it.

AS I take it for granted you would not have engaged in this controverſy, eſpecially after a perſon for whom you profeſs ſo great an eſteem as Dr. Price, without thinking you felt yourſelf fully equal to it, and without being determined to ſee it fairly out, I ſhall take the liberty, which I hope you will alſo do with reſpect to me, (that we may ſave ourſelves as much trouble as poſſible) to point out what I think will be of uſe to us in conducting it. And in doing this, I ſhall purpoſely go over ſome of the ground I have already trod, but in a different direction,

direction, hoping that different views of the ſame objects may be both pleaſing and uſeful.

In general, I think, we ſhall do well to conſider things as much as poſſible *without the uſe of words*, at leaſt ſuch words as are, on either ſide, charged with being the cauſes of miſtake. I ſhall treat of the principal of them ſeparately.

1ſt. *Of the Term* AGENT.

IN the farther proſecution of this debate, do not begin, as you have done now, with aſſuming that man, in conſequence of having a power of choice, is an *agent*, and that being an agent, he cannot be a mere paſſive being, acted upon by motives, &c. but muſt be poſſeſſed of a power of proper ſelf-determination. In fact, this is no better than taking for granted the very thing in diſpute, and therefore you might as well, with Dr. Beattie, diſclaim all *reaſoning* on the ſubject, and aſſert your liberty on the footing of *common ſenſe*, or *inſtinct* only.

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The only unexceptionable method is, to attend to the real *phenomena of human nature*, and to conſider the known actions of men in known ſituations, in order to determine whether our volitions, which precede all our actions, and direct them, be not always *definite in definite circumſtances*. If you admit this, and I think it almoſt impoſſible not to admit it, you admit all that I contend for; becauſe it will then follow, that from a man's birth to his death, there is an unalterable chain of *ſituations* and *volitions*, invariably depending on one another. Your ſaying that, if this be the caſe, man is no *agent*, will avail nothing; for if that word imply more than the actual phenomena will authorize, the agency of man, in that ſenſe of the word, flattering as it may ſound, muſt be given up.

Dr. Price does, in fact, allow that men's volitions are definite in definite circumſtances, for he ſays it is the greateſt abſurdity to ſuppoſe that men ever act either without or againſt motives, but that the ſelf-determining

ing power is wanted only when the motives are equal; which, conſidering how very ſeldom this can be ſuppoſed to be the caſe, reduces this boaſted liberty of man, in my opinion, to a very ſmall matter, hardly worth contending for.

In this you differ from him. For you carefully avoid making that conceſſion, and always, at leaſt generally, ſuppoſe the mind capable of acting contrary to any motive whatever. But then you will do well to conſider whether, conſiſtently with the phenomena, Dr. Price could avoid making that conceſſion, alarming as you may think it; and whether it be probable that, in fact, men ever do act either without, or contrary to motives. And if he never *does*, you will not eaſily prove that he *can*.

If man be an agent, in your ſenſe of the word, that is, if his will be properly *ſelf-determined*, you muſt ſhew that nothing foreign to the will itſelf, nothing that can come under

under the deſcription of *motive*, or the circumſtances in which the mind is, regularly precedes the determination. For if any ſuch foreign circumſtances, any thing that is not *mere will*, does conſtantly precede every determination, we are certainly authorized, by the eſtabliſhed rules of philoſophizing, to conſider theſe circumſtances as the proper cauſes of the determination, and may, therefore, ſay that the will is influenced or acted upon by them, and ſo, going backwards in the ſame train, we ſhall conclude that there can be no more than one proper agent in the univerſe.

2. *Of Reſponſibility.*

LET us likewiſe conſider the nature and uſe of *moral government*, as much as poſſible, without the uſe of ſuch words as *reſponſibility*, *praiſe*, *blame*, &c. and only conſider how a wiſe governor would treat beings whoſe wills ſhould be invariably influenced by motives; and if the proper ends of government would,

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in fact, be anſwered by annexing happineſs to ſuch actions as we call virtuous, and miſery to ſuch as we call vicious, (ſo that every thing we now ſee or expect would be done) it will follow, that, for any thing that appears to the contrary, we *may* be ſo conſtituted. If the word *reſponſibility*, as you arbitrarily define it, will not apply to ſuch a ſyſtem, it ought to be diſcarded from the language of philoſophers.

Take the ſame courſe with the words *merit* and *demerit*, *virtue* and *vice*, &c. and on this ſubject, attend particularly to what Dr. Hartley, in a very ſhort compaſs, moſt excellently obſerves. "It may be ſaid," ſays he, p. 343, "that the denial of free will "deſtroys the diſtinction between virtue and "vice. I anſwer, that this is according as "theſe words are defined. If free will be "included in the definition of virtue, then "there can be no virtue without free will. "But if virtue be defined *obedience to the will* "*of God, a courſe of action proceeding from the*

"*love*

" *love of God,* or *from benevolence,* &c. free " will is not at all neceſſary; ſince theſe af- " fections and actions may be brought about " mechanically.

" A ſolution analogous to this may be " given to the objection from the notions of " merit and demerit. Let the words be de- " fined, and they will either include free " will, or, not including it, will not require " it; ſo that the propoſition, *merit implies free* " *will,* will either be identical or falſe."

In all that you have ſaid on the ſubject of reſponſibility, you take your own principles for granted, and then it can be no wonder that all your concluſions follow. You make it eſſential to reſponſibility that man has a power, independent of his diſpoſition of mind at the particular time, and of all motives, of acting otherwiſe than he did, and you take not the leaſt notice of what I have advanced on that ſubject in the *Correſpondence with Dr. Price,* p. 150, &c. where I ſhow that, not-

withſtanding it be not in the power of moral agents to act otherwiſe than they do, yet that a moral governor, who conſults the good of his ſubjects (whoſe minds and whoſe conduct he knows to be influenced by motives) muſt treat them in the very ſame manner that you yourſelf acknowledge he ought to do. He will apply ſuffering with propriety, and, with good effect in any caſe in which the apprehenſion of it will ſo impreſs the minds of his ſubjects, offenders and others, as to influence their wills to right conduct. So that, as I have obſerved, p. 151, "though the vulgar and philo-"ſophers may uſe different language, they "will always ſee reaſon to act in the very "ſame manner. The *governor* will rule vo-"luntary agents by means of rewards and "puniſhments; and the *governed*, being vo-"luntary agents, will be influenced by the "apprehenſion of them. It is conſequently "a matter of indifference in what language "we deſcribe actions and characters." This you ſhould have particularly conſidered and have replied to. You muſt not tell me what the

the word *reſponſibility* requires; but you muſt ſhow that, ſuppoſing men to be what I ſuppoſe them, the ſupreme ruler ought to have treated them otherwiſe than he actually has done. If not, every fact exactly correſponds with my hypotheſis, and then on what can your objection be founded, except on ſomething that is merely verbal.

3. *Of the Prejudice ariſing from the terms* MACHINE *and* NECESSITY.

YOU miſlead and deceive yourſelf, I am perſuaded, not a little, by the frequent uſe of the opprobrious term *machine*, ſaying, in the firſt place that, becauſe a man wills *neceſſarily*, that is, definitely in definite circumſtances, he wills *mechanically*; and then having made a man into a *machine*, you, unknown to yourſelf, connect with it every thing opprobrious and degrading belonging to a common clock, or a fulling-mill.

But you might eaſily correct this by only conſidering what you yourſelf allow to be neceſſary relating to the mind of man, viz. *perception* and *judgment*. Is there not ſomething inconceivably more excellent in theſe powers than in thoſe of common machines, or mills, and even ſomething that bears no reſemblance to any thing belonging to them, though they all agree in this one circumſtance, that their reſpective affections are neceſſary? Now ſuffer your mind to be ſufficiently impreſſed with the wonderful nature and excellence of the powers of *perception* and *judgment*, and you cannot think the *will* at all degraded by being put on a level with them, even in the ſame reſpect in which they all agree with any common machine, or a mill, viz. that all its affections are definite in definite circumſtances, though this property be beſt expreſſed by the term *neceſſary*.

If you ſuffer your mind to be affected by ſuch prejudices as theſe, you may decline applying

applying the term *ſubſtance* to the mind, becauſe it is likewiſe applied to wood and ſtone, and oblige yourſelf to invent ſome other term by which to diſtinguiſh it from them.

With reſpect to the Divine Being, you will not ſcruple to ſay, that his actions are always definite in definite circumſtances, and if you decline applying the term *neceſſary* to them, it is only becauſe you conceive that it implies ſomething more than *definite in definite circumſtances*, whereas the two phraſes are perfectly ſynonymous, and it is nothing but the word that you can diſlike. The *reaſons* why we ſay that any affection or action is neceſſary, and why it is definite in definite circumſtances, are the very ſame, and cannot be diſtinguiſhed in the mind. It is the *conſtant obſervation of its taking place in thoſe circumſtances.*

It is becauſe we ſee that a clock always ſtrikes when the hands are in certain poſiti-

ons, that we conclude it always *will* do ſo, and, therefore, *neceſſarily muſt* do ſo, or that (whether it be known or unknown to us) there is a *cauſe* why it cannot be otherwiſe. Now, can you help applying this mode of reaſoning, and, conſequently, this phraſeology, to the mind, and even the divine mind, and, at the ſame time, be free from weak and unworthy prejudices? For, if the will cannot act but when motives are preſent to it, and if it always determines definitely in definite circumſtances with reſpect to motives, you cannot but conclude that there is a ſufficient reaſon, known or unknown to you, why it *muſt* be ſo, and you can have no reaſon to ſuppoſe that it ever can be otherwiſe. And, in this caſe, whether you ſcruple to ſay, that ſuch a determination can be called *action*, or be ſaid to be *neceſſary*, your ideas of the things are the ſame. If any thing always *will* be ſo, there can be no good reaſon why we ſhould ſcruple to ſay that it *muſt*, and *muſt neceſſarily* be ſo.

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The Divine Being, you will allow, notwithſtanding the incomprehenſibility of his nature, always acts definitely in definite circumſtances. It would be a weakneſs and imperfection to do otherwiſe. In fact, it is no more a degradation of him to ſay that he acts *neceſſarily*, than that his eſſence may be termed *ſubſtance*, or *being*, in common with that of the human mind, or even that of wood and ſtone.

You will ſay, and juſtly enough, that this obſervation applies to the Divine Being only as *actually exiſting*, and *operating*; and that originally, and before the creation, when there were no external circumſtances by which his actions could be determined, his volitions muſt have been, in the proper and ſtrict philoſophical ſenſe of the word, *free*. But then there never can have been a time, to which that obſervation applies, becauſe there never can have been any time in which the Deity did not *exiſt*, and conſequently *act*.

For, ſuppoſing him not to have been employed in creation, &c. (which, however, I think we can hardly avoid ſuppoſing) he muſt at leaſt have *thought*, and *thinking*, you will not deny to be the acting of the mind. The origin of action, therefore, in your ſenſe of the word, that is, the origin of ſelf-determination, is the ſame as the origin of the Deity, concerning which we know nothing at all.

Beſides, how can you, or any of Dr. Clark's admirers, think it any degradation to the Deity, that he ſhould *act* neceſſarily, when you allow that he *exiſts* neceſſarily? Is not the term juſt as opprobrious in the one caſe as in the other? Nay, might it not rather be ſuppoſed, by analogy, that the actions of the being whoſe exiſtence is neceſſary, muſt be neceſſary too. With reſpect to your notion of dignity and honour, I would aſk, Is not the *exiſtence* of any being or thing, of as much importance to him, as his *acting?* Is not

not then his being ſubject to neceſſity as great a reflection upon him in the former caſe as in the latter? In ſhort, every thing that you conſider as *degrading* and *vilifying* in man, on account of his being ſubject to neceſſity, in his exiſtence or actions, might, if I were diſpoſed to retort ſo trifling and miſtaken a conſideration, be applied to the Divine Being himſelf. What I now obſerve is only to take off the force of your prejudice againſt the doctrine of neceſſity, on account of its exhibiting man, as you ſuppoſe, in a degrading and unimportant light.

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THE CONCLUSION.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE now gone over all the topicks that I think of much importance to diſcuſs with you. I might have taken a much larger compaſs; but I was unwilling to take in more objects than ſuch as I thought I might poſſibly throw ſome new light upon. As to what you ſay concerning the doctrine of the ſcriptures, and ſeveral other articles, I leave the field open to you, being fully ſatisfied with what I have already advanced, and having nothing material to add to it.

You will probably think there is an appearance of *arrogance* in the tone of this letter.

ter. But in this, I think, you will do me injuſtice; my manner of writing being nothing more than what neceſſarily ariſes from the fullneſs of my perſuaſion concerning the truth and importance of the doctrine I contend for; and this, I think, is not greater than your own. But in this I muſt appeal to indifferent perſons, if any ſuch there be, who will give themſelves the trouble to read what we have written.

We all ſee *ſome things* in ſo clear and ſtrong a light, that, without having any high opinion of our own underſtandings, we think we may challenge all the world upon them. Such all perſons will think to be moſt of the propoſitions of Euclid, and ſuch, I dare ſay, with you are many tenets in theology. You would not heſitate, I preſume, to maintain that *bread and wine* cannot be *fleſh and blood*, againſt even a Boſſuet, or a Thomas Aquinas, than whom, it is probable, the world never produced a greater man; and that *three perſons*,

ſons, each poſſeſſed of all the attributes of God, muſt make more in number than *one God*, againſt all the divines that the three churches of Rome, England, and Scotland, could name to hold the diſputation with you. And, though it ſhould be deemed, as by them it certainly would be, the height of arrogance in you to hold out this challenge, it would not give you any diſturbance; nor, in fact, would you think very highly of yourſelf, though you ſhould gain a decided victory in ſuch a conteſt.

Now, this happens to be my caſe with reſpect to the doctrine of Neceſſity. I really think it the cleareſt of all queſtions, the truth of it being as indubitable as that the three angles of a right-lined triangle are equal to two right angles, or that *two* and *two* make *four*, and, therefore, I have no feeling either of *fear* or *arrogance*, in challenging the whole world in the defence of it. This argument I compare to ſuch ground as one man may defend

defend againſt an army. It is, therefore, abſolutely indifferent to me by *whom*, or by *how many*, I be aſſailed. You would, probably, ſay the ſame with reſpect to the doctrine of Liberty, at leaſt the ſtyle in which your book is written ſeems to ſpeak as much; and yet I by no means think you deficient in modeſty, any more than I do in underſtanding and ability. I only wiſh, therefore, that, notwithſtanding the confidence with which I have written, you would put the ſame candid conſtruction on my conduct, that I do on yours.

I make allowance for our difference of opinion, on account of the different lights in which we happen to ſee things, or in which they have been repreſented to us; nor do I at all expect that any thing I have now advanced, or am capable of advancing, will make the leaſt change in your view of things. A change in things of ſo much moment, which would draw after it a thouſand other changes,

changes, is not to be expected either in you or myſelf, who are both of us turned forty, and who were, I ſuppoſe, metaphyſicians before twenty. Judging of ourſelves by other men, we muſt conclude that our preſent *general ſyſtem of opinions*, whether right or wrong, is that which we ſhall carry to our graves. Thoſe who are younger than we are, and whoſe principles are not yet formed, are alone capable of judging between us, and of forming their opinions accordingly; and in that reſpect, they may derive an advantage from theſe publications that we cannot derive from them ourſelves.

We ſee every day ſuch inſtances of *confirmed judgments* in things of the greateſt, as well as of the leaſt moment, as ought to make the moſt confident of us to pauſe, though every man is neceſſarily determined by his own view of the evidence that is before him. I am well aware that, let me place the evidence for the doctrine of neceſſity in the ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt and cleareſt light that I poſſibly can, arguing either from the nature of the will, obſervations on human life, or the conſideration of the divine preſcience; let me deſcribe the doctrine of imaginary liberty as a thing ever ſo abſurd, and impoſſible in itſelf, as totally foreign to, and inconſiſtent with all principles of juſt and moral government, and ſupplying no foundation whatever for praiſe or blame, reward or puniſhment; the generality of my readers will never get beyond the very threſhold of the buſineſs. They will ſtill ſay, "Are we not conſcious of our freedom, can-"not we do whatever we pleaſe; ſit ſtill, walk "about, converſe, or write, juſt as we are diſ-"poſed?" and they will fancy that all my reaſoning, plauſible as it may ſeem, cannot, in fact, deſerve any attention; and even though they ſhould be ſilenced by it, they will not be the nearer to being convinced.

But juſt ſo we ſee it to be in politics. Let ſuch writers as Dr. Price explain ever ſo clearly

clearly the injuſtice of taxing any people without their conſent, ſhewing that the ſame power that can compel the payment of one penny, may compel the payment of the laſt penny they have, and that a foreign people or nation, eaſing themſelves by laying the burthen upon others, will be diſpoſed to proceed as far as poſſible in this way; ſtill he will never ſatisfy many perſons of landed property in this country, who will anſwer all he can ſay by one ſhort argument, the force of which they feel and comprehend, ſaying, "What, "ſhall we pay taxes, and the Americans "none?" The Doctor may repeat his arguments, and exhibit them in every poſſible light, he will get no ſufficient attention to them from a perſon whoſe whole mind is occupied with the *ſingle idea*, of his paying taxes, and the Americans paying none.

Notwithſtanding, therefore, all that I ſhall ever be able to write in favour of the doctrine of neceſſity, your ſuppoſed *conſciouſneſs of liberty*,